



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

SKOPJE • MACEDONIA



Ambassador Paul Wohlers' remarks for the opening of the Rule of Law Film Fest  
Cinematheque of Macedonia  
March 1, 2012

Good evening and welcome to the opening night of the Rule of Law in American Cinema film festival.

I am delighted to be here tonight in the company of so many honored guests, including legal practitioners, students of law, civil activists, and professional journalists. Our hope is that this series of films will present several different concepts of rule of law to our audience and that it will launch some discussions about the effect that rule of law has on our societies and our individual lives.

The 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, said: *"Ours is a government of liberty by, through, and under the law. No man is above it, and no man is below it."*

The concept that no one person is above the law encourages all citizens, no matter how high their position, to act responsibly and obey the law for the common good of every other citizen. It means that there are consequences for all individuals, regardless of a position or title, if laws are ignored or abused.

At the same time, the notion that no one person is beneath the law protects the individual rights of every citizen, including rights granted by a constitution or a bill of rights, as well as basic human rights. Judges and courts enforce and protect these rights equally for all citizens, and these rights may not be denied without due process of law.

Legal systems are adapted in different places and different societies, as each individual system must respond to local cultures and conditions. But, regardless of minor differences in legal systems, rule of law remains a solid foundation for peace, order, and freedom.

Tonight we will watch a film that is considered a true American classic, *12 Angry Men*. This famous film demonstrates the effect that just one individual can have in a legal system that is based on rule of law. Additionally, the film conveys the importance of impartiality and illustrates the standard in the U.S. criminal justice system that guilt must be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt.

Thank you for joining us here tonight for the special screening of this film. I look forward to the conversations this story will inspire.

Many thanks as well to our partners at the Cinematheque of Macedonia for putting this series together, as well as to Futura Advertising and Marketing Agency for the design and work on the promotional materials for this festival.

Enjoy the show!

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